

Walks from Holcombe

Walk A.- Peel Monument via Beetle & Harcles Hills

This is one of a set of walks starting from a car park in Holcombe near Ramsbottom. For an overview of the different walks, look at the end of this booklet. Some of the other routes can be merged with this one.

The focus of this particular 5 mile (8Km) walk is to enjoy most of the length of the Holcombe Moor ridge which is an ancient pilgrim's route to Whalley Abbey (north of the walk), visiting Robin Hood's Well, Ellen Strange's memorial, Pilgrim's Cross and Peel Monument.

There are notes on these features on the back pages of this booklet.

The route is initially described in an anti-clockwise direction but can easily be followed either way. Jump to **point 13** to use the clockwise description.

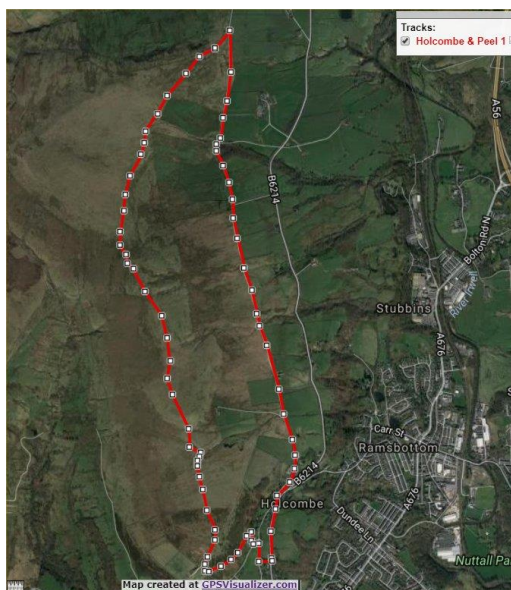
Heading clockwise means an initial 350 ft ascent on an easy path and an undulating/descending return. Anti-clockwise is a longer more gentle series of short ascents and then a sharp but easy descent.

While the path over the moor is pretty obvious, it would be prudent to choose a different walk if the moor might be in cloud.

This walk can ONLY be tackled when the military firing range is open to the public. Please check in advance either by calling, 01204 512615 or visiting this website:-

www.gov.uk/government/publications/holcombe-moor-firing-times

The walk commences from the car park at SD781162 or BL8 4NN (which is a few yds south of the car park.) The car park has a 2m height barrier.



It is important to always be appropriately dressed for the conditions and carry, and know how to use, a suitable map for the walk.

This description can be used/printed/shared for personal use, or to lead a walk but not for commercial use without the author's written consent. 2-June-2016



1: SD 781162 Leave the car park and turn right (north) along the B6214. After ¼ mile (400m) find a path angling off to the left of a house. This joins Moor Road after a short distance. (alternately a few yds further on the B6214 the “Moor Road” itself goes off to the left).



2: SD 782166 Take this path which steadily ascends for the first 350yds(330m) and then is undulating and gently ascending. It is followed for nearly 2 miles (3.2Km), passing through some gates, and with an optional turn at just over 1.5 miles. (2.4Km). During this stretch the view to the left is of the moor you will return by. Views to the right are over Ramsbottom towards Edenfield and Scout Moor with it's wind farm.



3: SD 778188 At the 1.5 mile point, there is a crossing path, on the right from the B6214 and on the left up towards the moor.

Optionally you can follow this and bypass about ¾ mile (1.2Km) of the walk (rejoin at **point 7**). This will miss the Ellen Strange and Robin Hood well features. **Otherwise** continue on for about ½ mile (800m) to go through a gate and in a few yards find the Robin Hood Well on the left.



4 SD 779195 The well is ancient and on the Pilgrim's route but little is known about it's history. See rear of the booklet.

5: SD 779195 Return through the gate. and follow the path that immediately veers uphill on the right. For a short distance it is fairly steep but then levels out. In about 260 yds (240m) look for a small memorial stone and cairn together.



6: SD 777194 This is Ellen Strange's memorial and cairn. See the back page for some history on this. It is **important** to bear left now. Head towards a flagpole in the distance. In about 1/3 rd mile(550m) find a signboard warning that the path is closed during live firing on the adjacent range.



7: SD 773189 Most of the ascent is complete by here. So possibly a good refreshment point. To continue just follow the path to the right of the signs for ½ mile (800m) to find the Pilgrims Cross. (the highest point is passed after 500 yds/450m though you may not notice.) If there is live firing, you will be forced to the left over the moor. Not easy.



8: SD 772182 A number of paths meet at the pilgrim's cross (see back page for history). You need to take the path half left (SE) and follow it for over 1 mile (1.6Km) to reach Peel Monument. The base is convenient for a refreshment stop. Much of this stretch is fully exposed to any crossing wind.

Also, as you descend steeply from Harcles Hill, you encounter a stream which can be a problem.





9: SD 776169 There is a good chance that the stream is difficult to cross though careful prodding and footwork may succeed. If in doubt, about 110 yds (100m) to the left (E), it is possible to easily step across though you need to regain the path over lumpy moorland. Once on the track head towards the Peel Monument to encounter a double gate (often with some shallow flooding)



10: SD 777166 Pass through the gates to reach the Monument. Its location offers wide ranging views over the area, and if not too busy some steps to sit on! To continue, take the clear path in front of the Monument and follow it to the right (SW). It zig zags steadily downhill to reach a final “zig” at some houses.



11: SD 780164 Turn hard right here and follow the path for 100yds (90m) to find a gate onto a footpath on the left.



12: SD 780162 Go through the gate and down the short path through another gate onto the B6214 just opposite the car park.

End of the Anti-Clockwise route.

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==== Directions for Clockwise Route ===

13: SD 781162 From the car park cross the road and slightly left there is a gate into a short fenced path. Go along the path, through the gate at the end and turn right along the cobbled road to a corner 120yds (110m) away.



14: SD 780164 Turn hard left and then in a few yds turn hard right and follow this zig zag path all the way up to Peel Monument 350ft above.



15: SD 777164 Enjoy the wide ranging view from the monument. To continue, find the moorland path on the other side of the monument (bit west/left of north). NOT the solid track in a similar direction. After 160yds(140m) find a double gate, probably with shallow flooding between.



16: SD 777166 Go through the gate and continue following the obvious path. After 390 yds(350m) the path drops down to a stream. This can be a problem to cross unless it's dry weather. There is an easy crossing about 110yds(100m) to the right (E) of the main track though there is no obvious path to it. Once across continue on the obvious path which goes briefly but steeply up Harcles Hill.



(this is from the other side of gates)



17: SD 775172 (approx.) Continue over the hill to see the pilgrims cross in the distance beside a flagpole. (bit more than ½ mile (900m).



18: SD 772182 See the back of the booklet for information on the cross. It is IMPORTANT to bear Right at the cross. Almost due north. Follow the moorland path for about ½ mile (800m), passing some warning signs to find the main warning sign near a flagpole to it's left and corner of a stone wall on the right.



(from the other direction)

19: SD 773189 There is an option here of going right, downhill to Moor Road though this bypasses Ellen Strange's memorial and Robin Hood's Well.

Otherwise continue on as the path heads a little right and downhill.

In 1/3 rd mile (550m) a crossing path is reached at a small memorial and cairn.

This is Ellen Strange's memorial.



20: SD 777194 See the end of the booklet for information on this memorial. Bear right and continue downward to meet a gate on a track from the right i.e. Moor Road. Go through the gate and in a few yds on the left find Robin Hood's Well. See back of booklet for information.

21: SD 778195 Return through the gate to head south on Moor Road. Follow this to meet the B6114 after just under 2 miles (3.2Km). Continue along the B6214 for ¼ mile (400m) to the car park on the left. (If you exit Moor Rd on a lane passing to the right of a house to meet B6214 you can take the little road angling off to the right. After ¼ mile at SD 780162 take the short path back to the car park. This is the path you started on.)

=== End of Both Walk Directions ===

==== Some Historical Information ====

Ellen Strange's Memorial. On 26 January 1791 Ellen Broadley nee Strange's body was found possibly where the cairn is. The memorial is modern and placed there in 1978. Her husband was tried and acquitted of her murder, but numerous alternative stories exist. Most relate to Ellen taking up with a Pedlar who was caught, confessed and hanged at Lancaster and his body placed on a Gibbet on Bull Hill.

A more definitive history is found at:-
<http://www.unitetheunion.org/uploaded/documents/Ellen%20Strange%20booklet11-23788.pdf>

Pilgrim's Cross This is the site of a very ancient cross. Also known as Whowell's Cross and Chatterton's Cross. It was here in AD1176 and probably much earlier. In 1662 King Charles II gave the land to General Monk, Duke of Abermarle through whom it has descended to the present lord of the manor. Nothing is known of the removal of the cross but it's socketed foundation remained until destroyed by vandals in 1901. The memorial stone was placed there in May 1902. It is on the pilgrim's route to Whalley Abbey and it is believed they would rest and pray here.





Peel Memorial (also known as Holcombe Tower). Built in 1852 this well known Bury landmark was erected in tribute to one of Bury's most famous sons, Sir Robert Peel; founder of the Police force and Prime Minister 1841-1846. It cost £1,000 and was opened September 1852, the day after the inauguration of the Baily's statue in Bury. The tower stands 128ft high 1100 ft up and offers stunning views over Manchester and North Wales. When a flag flies from the tower it is open to the public, it's interior staircase having been replaced after it collapsed.



Robin Hood's Well. There are no records to say that Robin Hood's Well ever had healing powers, or to it being a sacred spring, but it must have had some holiness attributed to it by the monks and pilgrims who visited it and drank of its waters back in the mists of time. And there is nothing that says Robin Hood the outlaw of Sherwood Forest ever visited the well, though there is a Robin Hood's Inn down in Helmshore village. It may originally have been called Pilgrim's Well.

Eric Crichton 10-10-17

Relationship between the Holcombe Walks.

There are 4 main largely North-South paths around Holcombe/Ramsbottom.

These can be combined in many ways to produce walks of about 4-8 miles, mostly with at least 350ft ascent, up to perhaps 800ft ascent.

Some of the public footpaths, mainly at the north end, can be non viable so do check through the relevant walk descriptions. The top of the Moor is mainly viable.

Walk A – Goes along Moor Rd and Returns over the Moor top.

Only this walk is readily reversible. The others would have a steep final ascent.

Walk B – Outwards along country paths between two main roads and then return via Moor Road. (Or combine with Walk A to return over top of moor.

Walk C – Outwards down to and along the Irwell river then return by the country paths between the main roads.

Walks D – Down and along the Irwell river then ascend to Moor Rd to return or combine with Walk A to return over the top of moor.

IMPORTANT The moor has a military firing range on it. Check if it is open via . 01204 512615 OR www.gov.uk/government/publications/holcombe-moor-firing-times

